

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FOR APRIL 2000 FCCA JOURNAL

By Sam Hamrick

SPOKANE

We are only weeks away from the 2000 FCCA Conference in Spokane, Washington. Our hosts, Jim Larsen, Clerk of the Eastern District of Washington, and his committee have put together a comprehensive program that you will not want to miss.

Keynoting our meeting will be Ernest C. Friesen, past Director of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and futurist Jim Dator who will speak on the conference theme, "Beyond 2000."

Plans call for our Washington Update to be led by Administrative Office Director Leonidas Ralph Mecham and will include comments from key members of his staff on topics such as the FY 2001 Budget, Benefits Initiative, and Work Measurement.

Representatives of the Federal Judicial Center are planning to participate in the Washington Update and will lead continuing education sessions on writing, group dynamics, and personal safety. Conference sponsors are providing an important component to the educational program. The Bank of America will offer a class on investing and West Group will have a class on legal research.

We will also take care of the organization's business by electing officers and approving a budget. There will be time for the Clerks' Council and Deputy Clerks' Council to meet; however, the Spokane 2000 Conference will not be all work and no play. Spokane is the center of an extraordinarily beautiful part of America and our hosts plan to share their region with us in grand style with social events planned for each evening.

It is not too late to register for the 2000 FCCA Spokane Conference. Registration forms are in the *Journal* and available on the FCCA Web site at <http://www.id.uscourts.gov/fcca.htm>.

YOUR VOTE COUNTS

While I hope everyone reading this edition of the *Journal* will give serious consideration to attending the Spokane Conference, many FCCA members will not be able to attend. Even so, everyone can participate in the election of FCCA officers and proposed changes in the Bylaws. Nominations Committee Chair June Phillips offers information regarding how to cast an absentee ballot elsewhere in this edition.

We will be electing a new President Elect and conducting elections for the offices of Treasurer and Historian. We have two amendments to the Bylaws to consider. One will alter the election of officers so that we will be able to elect two officers along with half the Board members each year rather than three officers one year and one the next. The other amendment clarifies allowing the Chair of the Deputy Clerks' Council to be reelected. This change mirrors the procedure mandated for the

Chair of the Clerks' Council. Both amendments are more technical in nature than substantive. Both are recommended by the Bylaws Committee and endorsed by the Board of Directors.

Casting your absentee ballot is an important way for every member of FCCA to participate in the governing of their professional organization. If you are not able to join us in Spokane, I urge you to take time to send in your request for an absentee ballot. Just last year, in a particularly robust officer election, a majority of conference attendees voted for one candidate. When the absentee ballots were counted, the total majority elected the other candidate.

Requests for absentee ballots must be postmarked no later than May 12, 2000. Ballots must be postmarked no later than May 31, 2000. Clearly, absentee ballots make a difference in FCCA elections, and most assuredly, your vote counts.

EDUCATION

Article I, Section 1 of the FCCA Bylaws states that, "the Association will place great emphasis on continuing education programs... ". The primary purpose of FCCA is to be an educational organization. To reaffirm this purpose and to take time to assess where we need to go in providing continuing education programs, I plan to lead our Board of Directors in an open forum on education following the Board Meeting in Spokane.

We will place everything involving the delivery of FCCA educational programming on the table for comment and examination. What are we doing right and how could be more effective in achieving our basic purpose as an educational organization? I envision this open forum on education to be a very good investment of time for the Board.

Educational needs change over time. Perhaps you have some thoughts regarding this matter. Your comments are encouraged and may be sent electronically to Sam_Hamrick@gand.uscourts.gov or mailed to me at the address listed in the *Journal*. Your comments will be forwarded to the Board as it considers our future on this important matter.